Met Office

NEWS

New Chair to oversee critical public weather forecast

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The Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Chris Skidmore MP has annouced that Vice Admiral Duncan Potts CB is to lead the Public Weather Service Customer Group (PWSCG).

The purpose of the Public Weather Service (PWS), which is delivered by the Met Office, is to help protect lives, property and infrastructure from the impacts of severe weather and through the exploitation of weather information and services contribute to economic growth in the UK.

The PWSCG acts as the customer for the PWS on behalf of the public and the public sector. It is independent of Government and has an independent chair who is responsible to a minister.

Duncan Potts said: “I am delighted to have been appointed by the Minister to take on this important role as Chair of the PWSCG. The weather touches all our lives every day and accurate, timely and trusted weather forecasts provide a significant benefit to people and businesses across the UK.

"In my role, I will ensure that the delivery of the Public Weather Service meets the needs of all who benefit from these crucial Met Office services.

"This includes the important work of our responder community keeping citizens safe in times of need, to services that underpin safe aviation and the operations of our armed forces. I very much look forward to working closely with a range of government stakeholders, representatives of the general public and members of the PWSCG.”

The Chair ensures the effective operation of the PWSCG, by setting out delivery and performance levels, representing the interests of the group in Government initiatives and ensuring PWS funds are spent with due regard to economy, efficiency and value for money. The role is also responsible for raising the profile of the PWS and maximising its impact across the UK.

Met Office Director of Government Services, Andy Kirkman, said; “The chair of the PWSCG is a vital role and we are pleased to welcome Duncan to the customer group.

“Duncan will play a pivotal part in ensuring the Public Weather Service continues to provide timely information ensuring authorities, businesses and the public can meet the challenges of the weather here in the UK to both stay safe and thrive.

“We are looking forward to working closely with Duncan as we face the challenges going forward.”

The objectives of the PWSCG are:

- Setting the requirements and outputs of the PWS;
- Consulting widely with the public and other stakeholders to ensure these requirements meet current and future needs;
- Setting performance measures and monitoring performance of PWS outputs;
- Assessing the value for money for the PWS; and
- Agreeing provision of funding for the PWS

Non-executive director

Meanwhile Business and Energy Secretary Andrea Leadsom has appointed Alan Thorpe as a new non-executive director to the Met Office Board. Alan Thorpe will take up his role from November 2019 for three years. In this role Alan will work with the Met Office board and executive team to ensure the organisation continues to offer global leadership in the fields of weather and climate science.

Alan Thorpe is currently a Visiting Professor at the University of Reading following on from being the Director-General of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts between 2011 and 2015.

Non-Executive Director, Alan Thorpe said: “It is a privilege to be selected as a Non-Executive Director of the Met Office. The scientific research and operational forecasts from the Met Office have an international reputation for quality, accuracy and reliability. I look forward to working with Board colleagues, the Executive team and staff to help the Met Office build on its successes whilst continuing to transform to face the challenges of the future.”

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